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SEPTEMBER #218

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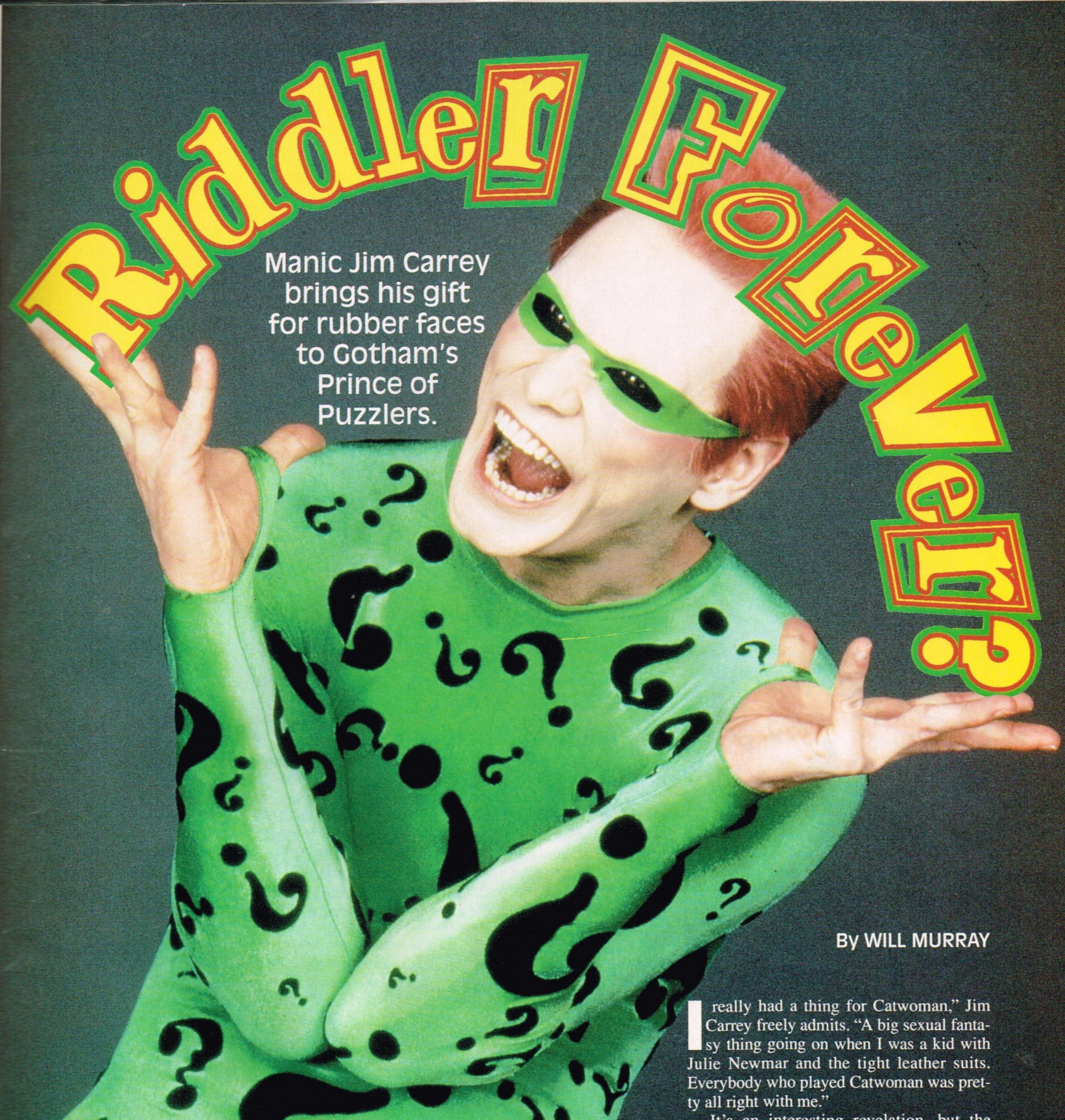
Riddler For Hire

Manic Jim Carrey brings his gift for rubber faces to Gotham's Prince of Puzzlers.



By WILL MURRAY

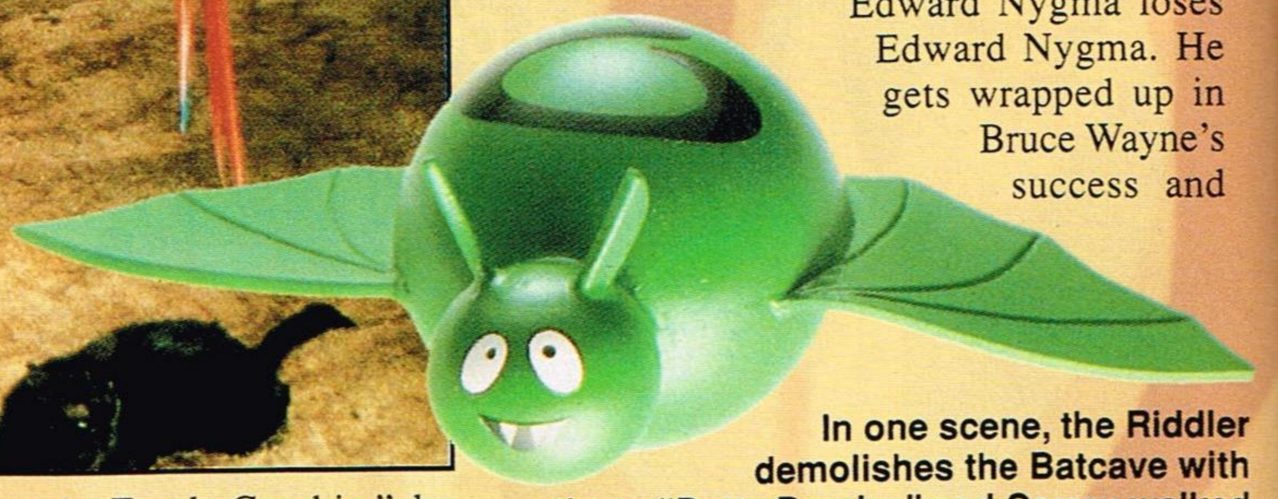
I really had a thing for Catwoman," Jim Carrey freely admits. "A big sexual fantasy thing going on when I was a kid with Julie Newmar and the tight leather suits. Everybody who played Catwoman was pretty all right with me."

It's an interesting revelation, but the question posed to the comic actor now starring in *Batman Forever* is whether or not his character, the Riddler, was his favorite of the many outrageous Batman TV villains. But that's Carrey. Always on. Turning serious, he takes another shot at answering before he starts sounding as if he's after Michelle Pfeiffer's job.

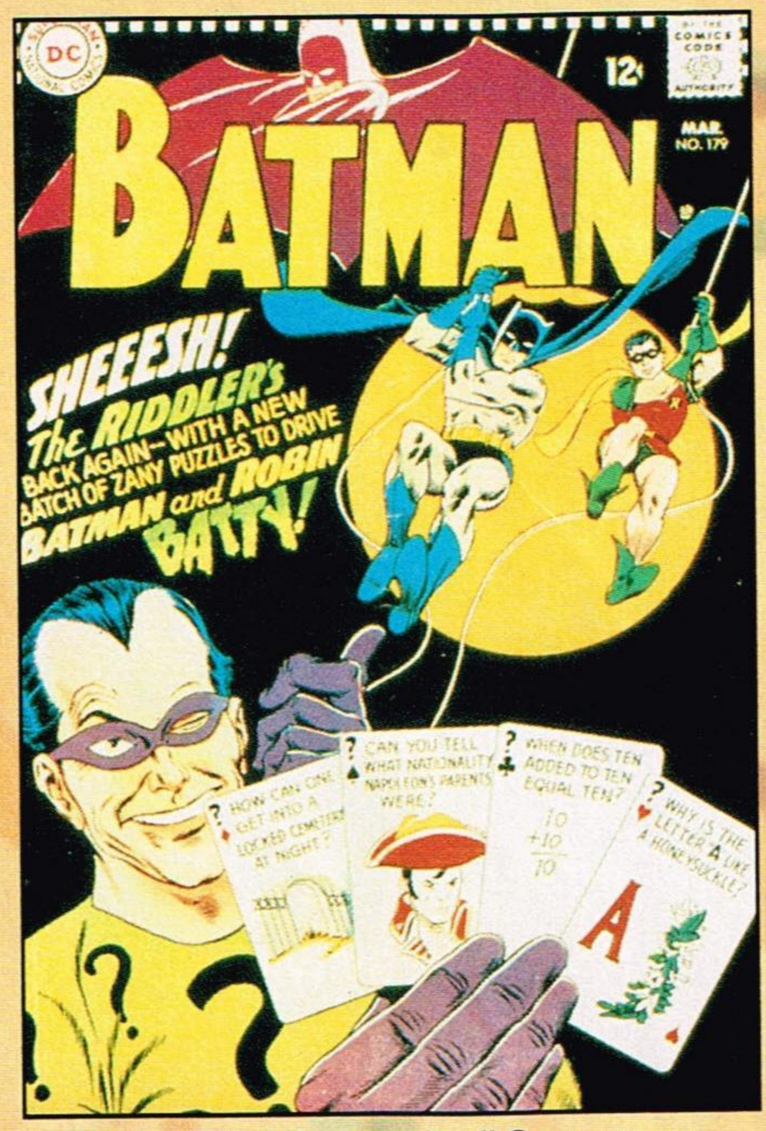
"As far as the male characters go," Carrey allows, "the Riddler was kinda perfect. It was a great surprise when I got the call that they wanted me to do it. I couldn't ask for a more absolutely perfect casting opportunity for me. It's just amazing. The puppet masters are going to work again."

Ace Photo: Jon Farmer/Copyright 1994 Morgan Creek Productions, Inc.

"Ace is nursed back to health by monks, so he fancies himself a holy man," reveals Carrey of the sequel to, *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*.



In one scene, the Riddler demolishes the Batcave with these "Batty Bombs," and Carrey walked through the fire—himself. "It was exciting."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COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BATMAN
MAR. NO. 179
SHEEESH!
The RIDDLER'S BACK AGAIN—WITH A NEW BATCH OF ZANY PUZZLES TO DRIVE BATMAN and ROBIN BATTY!
HOW CAN ONE GET INTO A LOCKED CEMETERY AT NIGHT?
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"I read a lot of the comics," Carrey says of the lengths he went to research his puzzling character.

Carrey also freely admits to being a huge fan of the *Batman* TV show. "I used to watch it before I went to bed," he says. "Every night. Without fail. My parents used it to make me wash behind my ears. 'If you don't wash properly, you can't watch *Batman*.' And that was it."

Comparisons are inevitable in this film. How will the new Riddler stack up against the unsurpassed TV interpretation of impressionist/actor Frank Gorshin (CS PRESENTS #1)? Carrey meets the tricky topic head-on.

"I tried not to do Frank Gorshin," he asserts. "Because he's so strong at it. He really laid down the gauntlet for it. He *was* the Riddler. I didn't try to outdo him or anything like that. I just tried to approach it like this is me. Edward Nygma is me going insane. What would I do? Where would I go? So, I tried to keep concentrating on that. But he's an amazing, amazing character."

Enigmatic Origins

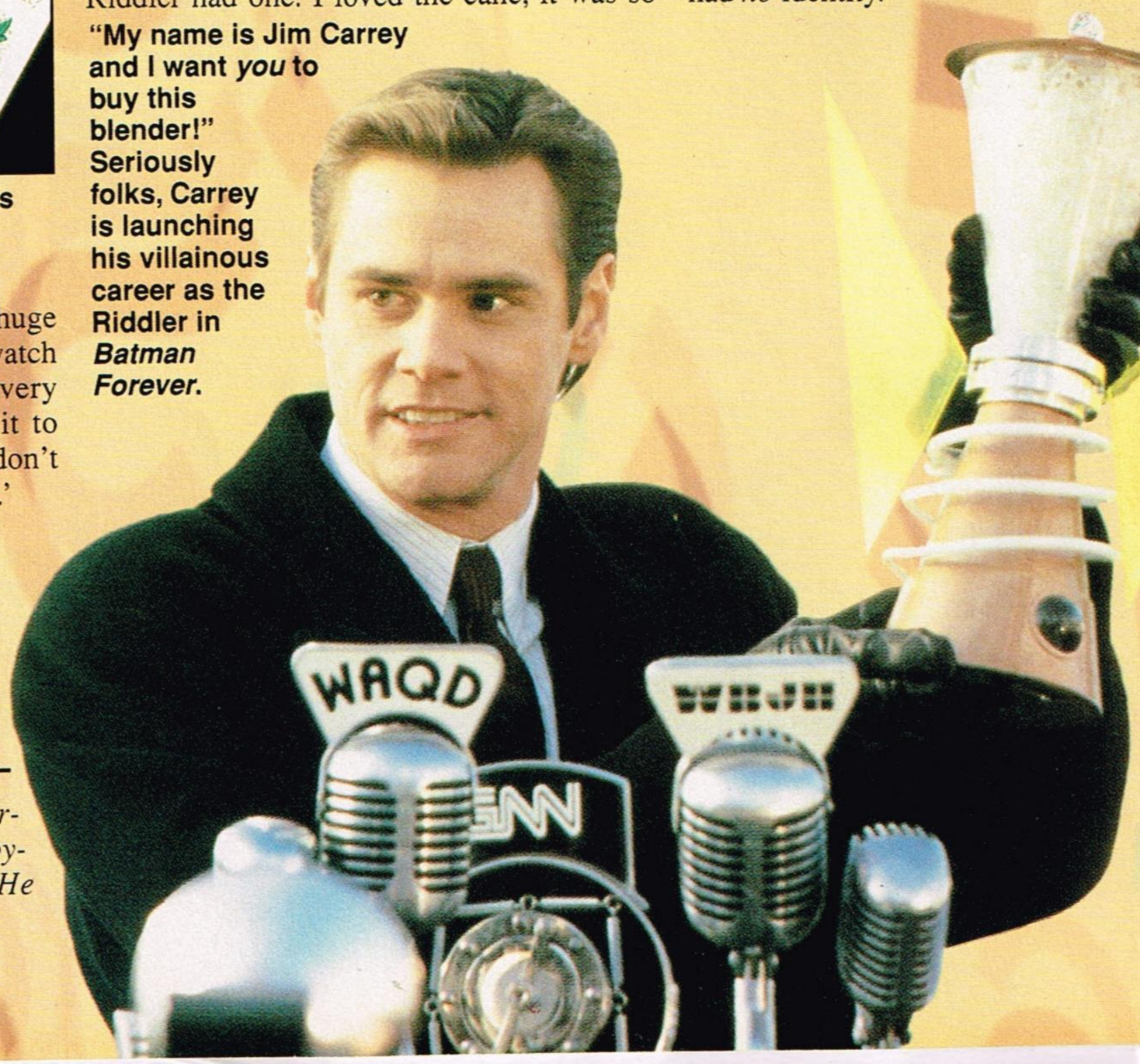
In preparation for the role as Batman's puzzling nemesis, the actor sifted through every kind of Riddler source material looking for fresh angles on the character.

"I read a lot of the comics. Actually, I wasn't crazy about a lot of the Riddler stuff. I was surprised to find that he had a cane. Apparently, the John Astin version of the Riddler had one. I loved the cane, it was so much fun. It took a while to learn it. I paralyzed my arm a few times just whacking myself with the stupid thing."

Much of *Batman Forever* deals with the Riddler's origin. In this version, he's Edward Nygma, a Wayne Enterprises research scientist with delusions of becoming Bruce Wayne's business partner.

"It's a progression," Carrey reveals. "I think what happens is at a certain point, Edward Nygma loses Edward Nygma. He gets wrapped up in Bruce Wayne's success and his grandiose world. So many people do that. They see the carrot dangling out here and they forget about themselves—that they have talent of their own and their own directions. That's what he does. He's a genius. But he loses himself because he covets somebody else's world, and somebody else's trip."

Carrey reveals he took some inspiration from a surprising source—Elvis Presley. "I wanted to go to Elvis. Elvis in Vegas with the eagle on his back. In Vegas, the art wasn't coming from inside Elvis any more. It was on the outside. 'Look at my diamond rings. Look at my eagle and my glasses.' You start adorning the outside. That's what I wanted the Riddler to do. He needed that because he had *no* identity."



"My name is Jim Carrey and I want *you* to buy this blender!" Seriously folks, Carrey is launching his villainous career as the Riddler in *Batman Forever*.

Selected BatPhotos: Ralph Nelson

WILL MURRAY, veteran STARLOG correspondent, writes Gold Eagle's Destroyer novels (#100, Last Rites, *$4.99). He profiled Russell Mulcahy in #205.*

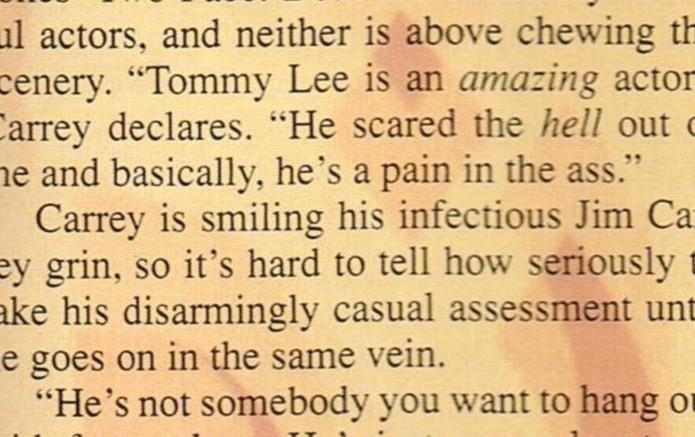
"He scared the *hell* out of me and basically, he's a pain in the ass," quips Carrey of his Oscar-winning co-star, Tommy Lee Jones (Two-Face).

All Batman Photos: Trademark & Copyright 1995 DC Comics/Courtesy Warner Bros.

Playing counterpoint to Carrey's Riddler is another longtime Bat-foe who also seeks revenge on the Dark Knight—Tommy Lee Jones' Two-Face. Both are extremely forceful actors, and neither is above chewing the scenery. "Tommy Lee is an *amazing* actor," Carrey declares. "He scared the *hell* out of me and basically, he's a pain in the ass."

Carrey is smiling his infectious Jim Carrey grin, so it's hard to tell how seriously to take his disarmingly casual assessment until he goes on in the same vein.

"He's not somebody you want to hang out with for too long. He's just a complex, troubled individual and that's basically where it's at. So, I *used* it. I had fun with it, and that was it. Tommy Lee comes from a different place than I do, so it was kinda fun, actually. It was kinetic and interesting. Like two rams smashing into one another."



Rumors of scene-stealing on the set abound—with Jones' Two-Face coming out second best to Carrey's Prince of Puzzlers. "To a certain extent, it's chemistry," Carrey suggests. "The Riddler *uses* Two-Face. The Riddler is more intelligent than anybody on Earth—in his mind. To even think he's on the same level as Two-Face would be ridiculous. So, he patronizes him as much as he can. He gets what he needs—which is strength—from Two-Face. So that put me in that 'I'm going to toy with you now' kind of place. 'And you can whack me too, but it won't really matter because I'll spit at you with my last breath.' "

Puzzling Tales

Batman Forever boasts the biggest budget of any film that Carrey has ever made, and he relished the experience. "You learn that you're not going to have to fight for every single idea or dollar," he explains. "With many projects, it is a creative war. And that's what you do. You go in knowing they don't have $80 million to spend and you fight it out. 'Yeah, I do want a monster truck in this scene. It's a funny idea and it's really good.' And you fight and fight. If you lose, you lose. This movie, it's insane. You can go to them and say, 'I think I should have solid gold testicles in this scene, and they'll go, 'Call the Prop Department. Get the testicle master on the phone!' "

Carrey had a great deal of input into the story via director Joel Schumacher, and happily ticks off several of his ideas. "The costume for the movie's ending. The sequence in the cave. All the lines. I didn't wing it, necessarily. Sometimes I did. Many times before we would go do a take, I would think of certain things and run them by Joel. It kept the vibe fresh."

Mask Photo: B. Little/Copyright 1994 New Line Cinema

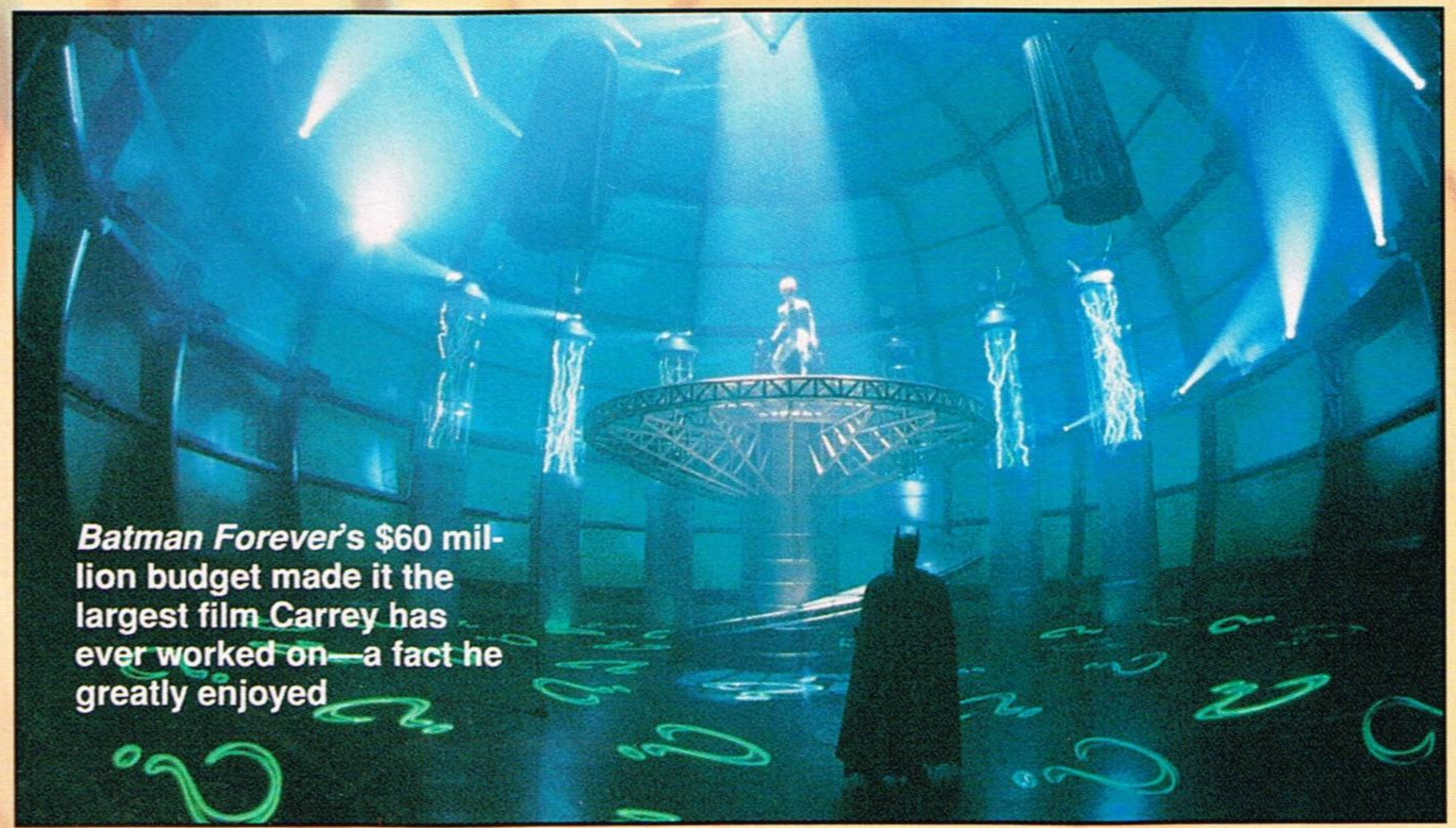
"Will I ever be able to portray a normal guy?" wonders Carrey, who will suit up to play the Mask again in *Revenge of The Mask*. "If I don't, then I don't."

"I loved the cane, it was so much fun," Carrey enthuses. "I paralyzed my arm a few times just whacking myself with the stupid thing."
IF YOU Look at The numbers on my face You Won't Find It Anyplace

Design & Layout: Jim McLernon

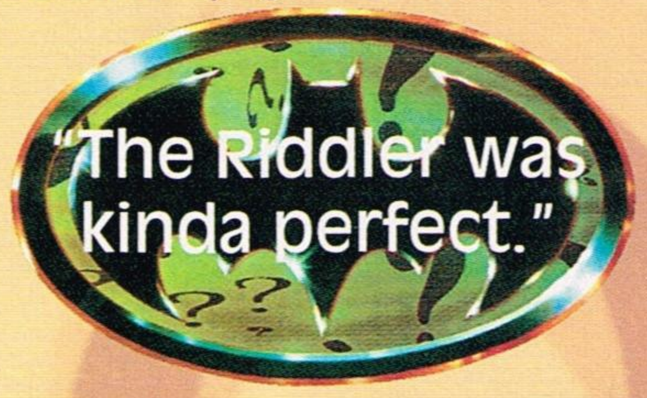
The actor also did some of his own stunts, including the maniacal rampage where he demolishes the Batcave with "Batty Bombs," despite all the personal risks involved.

"It was exciting," he enthuses. "Wow! Sure, you worry about it. If you take one wrong step when there are explosions around, you're wiped. I was as conscious as you can get knowing there are things *exploding* around you. At the same time, I had to do the cane moves and think of the lines and play the scene, which is hard to do. And you don't get a second chance because it would take them three hours to set it up again."



***Batman Forever*'s $60 million budget made it the largest film Carrey has ever worked on—a fact he greatly enjoyed**

Carrey's most recent roles have tended to slip into a well-defined lunatic groove in which the Riddler seems perfectly suited. If the specter of typecasting looms over his future, the actor expresses no outward concerns about essaying the Riddler.



"It's just another thing to play," he says. "I can't say I can totally play my career to the point where I say, 'I'll play dark. And light. Then this. And that. Here I'm going to be a bit on the shady side. But I have a sense of humor that will *kill* you. And then—' "

Carrey has slipped into one of his trademark histrionic riffs. Catching himself, he continues in a more subdued tone. "You take them as they come. It just happens that many of my characters are crazed, over-the-top guys. I just want to do stuff that's different. Even if it's *My Dinner with Andre*. I want to be able to sit there and hold the spoon in a way that's going to make the audience go, 'I've never seen *anyone* do that!' "

Mysterious Methods

Next up for Carrey is a reprise of his breakout character, Ace Ventura, in a movie sequel due out this fall. "Ace is going through a catharsis," Carrey reveals. "Something very tragic happens to him at the movie's beginning. He's nursed back to health by monks, so he fancies himself a holy man. You can kinda get the idea what his little inner conflict might be in that one. I've even got my own Gregorian chant, which is kinda cool."

Comparisons between his performance as the Riddler and his equally insane Mask character (which he discussed in CS #45) are also unavoidable, especially now that Carrey has signed to reprise the latter role in *Revenge of the Mask*. Cameron Diaz rejoins Carrey in this sequel, scripted by Brent Forester. Charles Russell once again directs, with production to begin in November.

"Will I ever be able to portray a normal guy?" Jim Carrey concludes with frank thoughtfulness. "I'm not really concerned about it. If I don't, then I don't. What the hell. Things aren't so bad. But I think I will, because life is pretty darn interesting. Just the normal things we do. That's where most of this stuff comes out of.

"Much of the stuff I do in these wild characters are things that just popped out in real life. I just save 'em up. I'm not really afraid. That's me. That's just what I am. Everybody plays himself in some way or another. I mean, Clint Eastwood has been doing 'Clint Eastwood' for a long time. And people haven't gotten tired of it. Who knows? Maybe I'll get lucky and they *won't* get tired of me. I don't think they'll ever *totally* figure me out. I hope not."